



Replacing Data Domain with ExaGrid Avoids Costly Upgrades and Cuts Backup Windows in Half

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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Wiltz Cutrer
Network Systems Administrator

Key Benefits:

- Nucor Steel Jackson avoids forklift upgrade by installing scalable ExaGrid system
- Nucor's backup windows cut in half since switching to ExaGrid-Veeam solution
- Data is restored rapidly from ExaGrid's unique landing zone
- ExaGrid's customer support and daily reports keep system maintenance easy to manage

Customer Overview

Nucor Corporation and its affiliates are manufacturers of steel and steel products, with operating facilities in the U.S. and Canada. Products produced include: carbon and alloy steel; hollow structural section tubing; electrical conduit; steel piling; steel joists and joist girders; steel deck; fabricated concrete reinforcing steel; cold finished steel; precision castings; steel fasteners; metal building systems; steel grating; and wire and wire mesh. Nucor is North America's largest steel recycler.

Scalable ExaGrid System Replaces Data Domain

When Wiltz Cutrer started his position as Network Systems Administrator at Nucor Steel Jackson, Inc., he found that the existing backup solution was not sustainable. "As our data increased, our backup window was growing larger, to the point where it became worrisome. We were backing up our data to Dell EMC Data Domain using Veeam and Veritas Backup Exec. If we continued to use Data Domain, we'd have to rip and replace the system, which is expensive, so we decided to look into other backup storage options.

"I'd used an ExaGrid system at a previous position and decided to install one at Nucor, since I'd had such a positive experience with the product. I also was able to experience ExaGrid's scalability firsthand in my last position when I was able to add ExaGrid appliances to the system to increase storage capacity and manage data growth, completely avoiding a 'rip-and-replace' situation, which was wonderful," said Cutrer.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 432TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.



Nucor Steel Jackson installed an ExaGrid system at its primary site that replicates to a second ExaGrid system at its disaster recovery (DR) site. "Setting up the replication was seamless. My ExaGrid support engineer called me and accessed the system remotely, and it only took 15 minutes to set up," said Cutrer. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with all of the most frequently used backup applications, so an organization can retain its investment in existing applications and processes. In addition, ExaGrid appliances can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for DR.

ExaGrid Cuts Backup Windows by 50%

Nucor Steel Jackson's backup environment is mostly virtualized, and Cutrer is using Veeam to back up the virtual servers as well as the few remaining physical servers. He was impressed with how simple it was to install the ExaGrid system and to configure it to work with Veeam, with remote assistance from his ExaGrid support engineer.



Cutrer backs up the data in daily incrementals, as well as weekly and monthly fulls. He has found that switching to ExaGrid has had a great impact on backup windows. "Our backup windows have shrunk since switching to ExaGrid. Our weekly full would take up to 16 hours when we used Data Domain, and that same backup job takes just eight hours now. Our largest daily incremental used to take two hours and that has been reduced to 30 minutes, and some of the smaller incrementals only take minutes," said Cutrer.

Cutrer has also been impressed with how quickly data can be restored using the ExaGrid-Veeam solution. "It's very easy to restore data from Veeam, especially since the data is often already sitting in the ExaGrid landing zone. Having data so quickly accessible is another major benefit of using ExaGrid over Data Domain."

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups while providing full system resources to the backups for the shortest backup window. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the DR site. Once complete, the onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for DR.

ExaGrid Support Is 'A Step Above'

In addition to shorter backup windows and quicker restores, one of the reasons Cutrer chose to install ExaGrid at Nucor Steel Jackson is its high-quality customer support. "ExaGrid Support is a step above the rest, and that was one of the main reasons that I decided to work with the product again. I like ExaGrid's approach to customer support where I'm able to work consistently with an assigned engineer, someone I can reach out to directly to get the assistance I need. My ExaGrid support engineer knows my environment and understands what I am

trying to do. I don't see that level of support very often in the IT industry. ExaGrid's technology is great, but it's the customer support that makes such a huge difference in the experience of using the product."

Cutrer likes the simplicity of managing the ExaGrid system, and finds that the reliability of the system gives him confidence on a professional level. "ExaGrid's reporting is much easier to keep track of. The Data Domain daily report was pages long and cumbersome to review as it didn't highlight what needed to be addressed. ExaGrid reports what is happening in a single-pane view. It only takes a quick glance to know if everything is working properly. I don't worry about the health of my backups anymore and I can answer confidently when my manager or an auditor asks about our backup processes. I know that our data is safe and secure."

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid's industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house level 2 engineers who are assigned to individual accounts. The system is fully supported, and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid's and Veeam's industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid's disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery. ExaGrid fully leverages Veeam's built-in backup-to-disk capabilities, and ExaGrid's adaptive data deduplication provides additional data and cost reduction over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication's built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid's disk-based backup system with adaptive deduplication to further shrink backups.

About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides intelligent hyperconverged storage for backup with a unique landing zone and scale-out architecture. The landing zone enables the fastest backups, restores, and instant VM recoveries. The scale-out architecture includes full appliances in a scalable system and ensures a fixed-length backup window as data grows, eliminating expensive and disruptive forklift upgrades. Learn more at www.exagrid.com.

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